

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TURKISH-GREEK EFFORTS TO RESOLVE SISMİK PROBLEM

REF: (A) ANKARA 5726, (B) ANKARA 5725

1. AT LUNCHEON TODAY MFA'S ANTONIOS NOMIKOS, DIRECTOR OF CYPRUS AND TURKISH AFFAIRS, DISCUSSED WITH DCM RECENT GREEK-TURKISH DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES ON THE SISMİK AFFAIR. NOMIKOS' ACCOUNT, WHILE SKITCHY, GENERALLY ACCORDED WITH INFORMATION PROVIDED AMBASSADOR MACOMBER BY ELEKDAG AND COSMADOPOULOS (REFTELS). IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY NOMIKOS, DCM SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THERE HAD BEEN SUCH EXCHANGES BUT REFRAINED FROM REVEALING ANY DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF THEM

2. ACCORDING TO NOMIKOS, GREEK OFFICIALS LAST WEEKEND WERE GENERALLY HOPEFUL THAT COMPROMISE COULD BE WORKED OUT WITH TURKS WHICH WOULD AVOID DANGERS OF CONFRONTATION. TURKS HAD APPEARED TO BE RECEPTIVE TO SUGGESTION THEY PROVIDE GOG ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS PLANNED ITINERARY OF SISMİK, COUCHED IN GENERAL RATHER THAN SPECIFIC TERMS, IN EXCHANGE FOR WHICH GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD DISCREETLY MONITOR MOVEMENTS OF VESSEL BUT WOULD UNDERTAKE NOT REPEAT NOT TO INTERFERE WITH ITS OPERATIONS AS LONG AS SISMİK ADHERED TO ITS AGREED SCHEDULE. COUPLED WITH THIS CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE
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A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO THE

EFFECT THAT THE SISMİK WOULD BE CONDUCTING SCIENTIFIC, INCLUDING SEISMIC, EXPLORATION, AND THAT, IN THE TURKISH VIEW, THIS RESEARCH WOULD IN NO WAY AFFECT LEGAL CLAIMS OF THE TWO PARTIES TO DISPUTED PORTIONS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

3. NOMIKOS ASSERTED THAT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT A DEAL OF THIS KIND HAD BROKEN DOWN LAST WEEKEND WHEN COSMADOPOULOS WAS ADVISED THAT CAGLAYANGIL COULD NOT REPEAT NOT KEEP A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT WITH HIM ON SATURDAY AND SHOULD SEE ELEKDAG INSTEAD. NOMIKOS WENT ON TO SAY THAT ELEKDAG HAD INFORMED COSMADOPOULOS THAT TURKISH GOVERNMENT WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT GREEK SUGGESTIONS AND EXCHANGE HAD BROKEN DOWN AT THAT POINT. GREEKS WERE UNABLE TO SAY WHY TURKISH ATTITUDE APPEARED TO HAVE CHANGED AFTER A PROMISING BEGINNING, BUT NOMIKOS ASSUMED THAT ECEVIT'S ATTACKS ON TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN THE CAUSE.

4. DCM OBSERVED THAT GREEK-TURKISH DIALOGUE ON SISMİK OPERATIONS, AS WELL AS ON OTHER PROBLEMS, WAS INDISPENSIBLE IF COMPROMISES WERE TO BE FOUND WHICH SERVED THE INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. HE STRONGLY HOPED THAT GREEKS WOULD ATTEMPT TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS AND ASKED WHETHER COSMADOPOULOS WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO TAKE UP THE SUBJECT AGAIN IN ANKARA. NOMIKOS REPLIED THAT SINCE THE TURKS HAD TERMINATED EXCHANGES ON THE SISMİK INITIATED BY THE GREEKS IT WOULD HAVE TO BE UP TO TURKS TO RESUME THEM. HE DID NOT SEE HOW COSMADOPOULOS COULD RAISE THE SUBJECT AGAIN IN THE FACE OF THE NEGATIVE POSITION TAKEN BY ELEKDAG.

5. DCM REPEATED THAT IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE SISMİK AFFAIR NEITHER GREECE NOR TURKEY COULD AFFORD TO LET MATTERS DRIFT ALONG ON A COLLISION COURSE. HE NOTED THAT ECEVIT WAS NOW IN THE US AND WOULD PRESUMABLY BE MORE RESTRAINED IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS THERE THAN HE HAD BEEN IN ANKARA. IF ECEVIT'S ATTACKS HAD INDEED BEEN A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT THEN GREEKS SHOULD MAKE THE MOST OF HIS ABSENCE BY SEEKING TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS

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IN ANKARA.

6. NOMIKOS SAID THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER THESE POINTS BUT WAS RELUCTANT TO STIMULATE NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR COSMADOPOULOS IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME SIGN FROM ANKARA THAT THE TURKS WOULD BE RESPONSIVE. HE HOPED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE US WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO ENCOURAGE THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT ALONG THESE LINES

AND ALSO URGE RESTRAINT ON ECEVIT IN WHATEVER CONVERSATIONS THE TURKISH OPPOSITION LEADER HAD WITH SENIOR WASHINGTON OFFICIALS.

7. COMMENT: WE CONCUR ENTIRELY WITH AMBASSADOR MACOMBER'S RECOMMENDATION, RECENTLY REITERATED IN REFTEL A, THAT THE DEPARTMENT WEIGH IN WITH BOTH SIDES TO REVIVE GREEK-TURKISH DISCUSSIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A FACE-SAVING COMPROMISE OF THE SISMİK PROBLEM. THE START THAT WAS MADE LAST WEEK SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE PERMITTED TO TRAIL OFF FOR IF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ARE UNWILLING TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE RATIONALLY, THE ONLY VOICES TO BE HEARD WILL BE THOSE OF THE MOST CHAUVINISTIC AND SELF-SERVING PARTIES ON BOTH SIDES WE WOULD HOPE, AT A MINIMUM, THAT TURKISH GOVERNMENT COULD BE INDUCED TO GIVE A SIGN THAT IT WAS WILLING TO CONTINUE TALKING WITH THE GREEKS ABOUT THE SISMİK OPERATION AND THAT CAGLAYANGIL WOULD BE WILLING TO RECEIVE COSMADOPOULOS FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF SUCH A SIGN WERE FORTHCOMING THE GREEKS COULD THEN BE PRESSED TO INSTRUCT COSMADOPOULOS TO MAKE A NEW APPROACH.

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